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RUEKJCS/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK PRIORITY
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 001761

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [UNDP](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY STRUGGLING TO FIND PROPER
SUPPORT ROLE FOR NIGER DELTA AMNESTY PROGRAM

REF: ABUJA 1669 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Political Counselor James P. McNulty
for reasons in Sections 1.4 (B) and (D).

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) International community representatives continue to struggle to identify an appropriate way to support the Niger Delta amnesty program. At recent donor meetings, diplomats expressed skepticism about various proposals, including those formulated by United Nations Development Program (UNDP) technical experts. A UNDP advisor told donors that the GON had neither funded nor planned adequately for the amnesty's disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) process.
END SUMMARY.

UNDP CONSULTANTS DESCRIBE SHORTCOMINGS

¶2. (C) Participants at recent meetings of donor nations and organizations attended by PolOffs in Abuja voiced skepticism over GON proposals for reintegration and resettlement. UNDP Peace and Development Advisor Dr. Abiodun Onadipe, overseeing UN consultations with the GON on amnesty, told donor representatives at a September 4 meeting that GON Amnesty Implementation Committee Chairperson and Defense Minister General Abbe remained highly suspicious of international involvement in amnesty and the DDR process. According to Onadipe, Abbe challenged the presence of a U.N.-sponsored DDR consultant at a recent Amnesty Committee meeting.

¶3. (U) UN DDR consultant Laurent Banal described various weaknesses in Nigeria's proposed DDR process. The GON plan, he said, would not address fundamental political problems that fomented militancy in the Niger Delta in the first place. Moreover, the GON lacked capacity for reintegration training. Banal claimed the GON had not provided a sufficient legal framework describing exactly what would happen to militants who disarmed and reintegrated. The GON Amnesty Committee, he added, continued to view international support as a "threat" to Nigeria, which Banal attributed to a belief in GON circles that the DDR process would expose lack of capacity and other weaknesses within the military. Such

distrust, he said, produced a "total lack of coordination" among international partners, the Amnesty Implementation Committee, the Niger Delta Ministry, and the Presidency.

14. (SBU) Banal said, of the estimated 1,000 militants who had disarmed thus far, some had returned home, others remained in camps awaiting reintegration training, and still others stayed at hotels near amnesty processing sites because of dissatisfaction with their accommodations at camps. Onadipe added that about 300 ex-militants still live in a handful of camps in Rivers State with nothing to do. Banal and Onadipe predicted that tensions would continue to increase as the amnesty deadline approached and government promises of reintegration training remained unfulfilled.

DDR PROCESS "BOOBY-TRAPPED" FROM THE START

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15. (C) Onadipe, opining that various officials in the Niger Delta Ministry did not care whether the DDR process succeeded or failed, described the amnesty process as "booby-trapped" from the start. Defense Minister and Amnesty Committee Chairperson Abbe told him that the GON preferred international financial aid for the DDR process "without strings attached."

"WISH LIST" ELICITS CRITICISM

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16. (C) At a partners meeting in August, international community representatives characterized the Niger Delta Ministry's initial, proposed amnesty implementation budget as amateurish and inadequate. The budget initially contained a "shopping list" of vehicles, laptop computers, and digital copiers for ministry staff. The Ministry, in the face of donor criticism, later withdrew requests for such items. To address colleagues' concerns, the UK PolCouns suggested creation of a Niger Delta trust fund to be overseen by an international board of directors, including Nigerians, to manage donor contributions to the rehabilitation portion of the DDR program. Other international representatives supported the proposal, noting NDDC mismanagement and outright theft of billions of dollars in funding over the years. The PolCouns confided to PolOff that her Government's strategy involved "hiding behind the UN," but if DDR experts sponsored by the UNDP and DFID succeeded in developing a workable plan for the GON rehabilitation and reintegration program, London would consider contributing to an internationally-administered trust fund.

ASPECTS OF UNDP PROPOSALS ELICIT SKEPTICISM AS WELL

17. (C) UNDP consultants also briefed donors on their recommendations, including creation of teams of four to five consultants with recent experience in the DDR process to work with the Niger Delta Ministry and Amnesty Implementation Committee to address capacity issues and develop a workable plan. They suggested creating a pool of international experts, funded by international partners, upon which the consultants could draw support. They also sought international partner funding for reintegration training, consisting mostly of international scholarships but also including some domestic scholarships. Canadian PolOff noted the potential reluctance of foreign governments to accept known militants for studies abroad, and admitted to us that the Canadian government had no money to offer anyway.

COMMENT

18. (C) Our diplomatic colleagues remain skeptical of the amnesty process, but some believe it merits qualified support for lack of a better alternative. The October 4 deadline for amnesty, for example, would not allow sufficient time to set up DDR training centers or enlist the 1,000 volunteers that consultants estimate needed for the DDR process to succeed. Given GON distrust of international community motives on this issue, the Amnesty Implementation Committee would not likely accept the four-to-five-person teams of consultants recommended by UNDP. The proposed overseas scholarships program appears to be a non-starter for most nations that could fund such scholarships. Moreover, many ex-militants at camps and hotels awaiting promised reintegration training could lose patience and decide to rejoin militant groups after the amnesty deadline passes. END COMMENT.
Qafter the amnesty deadline passes. END COMMENT.

SANDERS